An Old Fly Book & Other Stuff

By

John Warren Harper

Acquired 1960
The Gift of

HARRY T. PETERS

angler- HAR

An Able Day.

Some of the golfers, men spoiled by good fortune, complained that yesterday was too muddy for the one grave business of life. People incapable of appreciating such a prophet of the summer as yesterday should be sentenced to read the *Congressional Record* for the rest of their unnatural lives. A blander Washington's Birthday cannot be; millions of folks took the mothballs out of their constitutions.

Robins and other members of the bird choir were seen on the Essex Fells and elsewhere (and earlier). Even in the bleak wilds of Michigan as early as the middle of last week an anæmic and a meagre redbreast was hailed by BILL AUGST, as is told in canorous and immortal verse elsewhere on this page.

In spite of wars and woes let us be cheerful, hoping that "winter's rains and ruins are over." As a homelier bard hath sung:

"I heard the woodpecker pecking,
The bluebird tenderly sing;
I arose and turned out of the window
A patent back action handspring."

Why should a March blizzard be feared or counted on by the gloomy and the bilious? Can even Mad March resist the irresistible onset of uplift and reform?

BILL AUGST'S VISION.

A Most Sweet Song of the First Wolverine Robin of the Season.

From the Grand Rapids News.

Bill Augst, the soda jerker, stood at Jandorf's marble bar,
In meditation deep was he. His mind, it roamed afar
To bosky dells and rippling streams where trout are apt to lurk.
A vision of a joyous spring came to the luncheon clerk.
"Say, bo," he said, as he brought on our sinkers and our tea,
"Spring's on the way to this burg, sure, take that tip straight from me.
When I came down at 5 o'clock this morning—just at dawn—
I lamped the first spring robin hoppin' round upon a lawn."

Of course these first spring robin guys we've very often heard,
But Bill is a religious wight—we've got to take his word.
He's somewhat like George Washington, to fib he's not been taught,
We've not known Bill to tell a lie—or, tell one and be caught.
When that religious census thing was started in our town,
Bill was the first to go to work and take the census down.
We've got a lot of faith in Bill. For many years we've heard
His brand of wise philosophy on all that has occurred.
If any other friend of ours had said this wondrous thing
Concerning the discovery of this first bird of spring
We would have taken it with salt and winked the leeward eye.
But Bill is such an honest cuss—he'd tell the truth or die.

"The harbinger I saw," said Bill, "was somewhat weak and pale,
And was some wabbly on his pins. No, it were not no quail.
It staggered round about a tree, as crazy as a loon.
Its song was weak and seemed to say, 'I guess I'm here too soon.'
'Go back,' said I, 'Go back, you nut, unto the sunny south,
Before our climate stops your song by freezing up your mouth.'
But that bird simply looked at me pathetic like and broke
Into a song which seemed to say, 'I'll stay here, if I croak.'

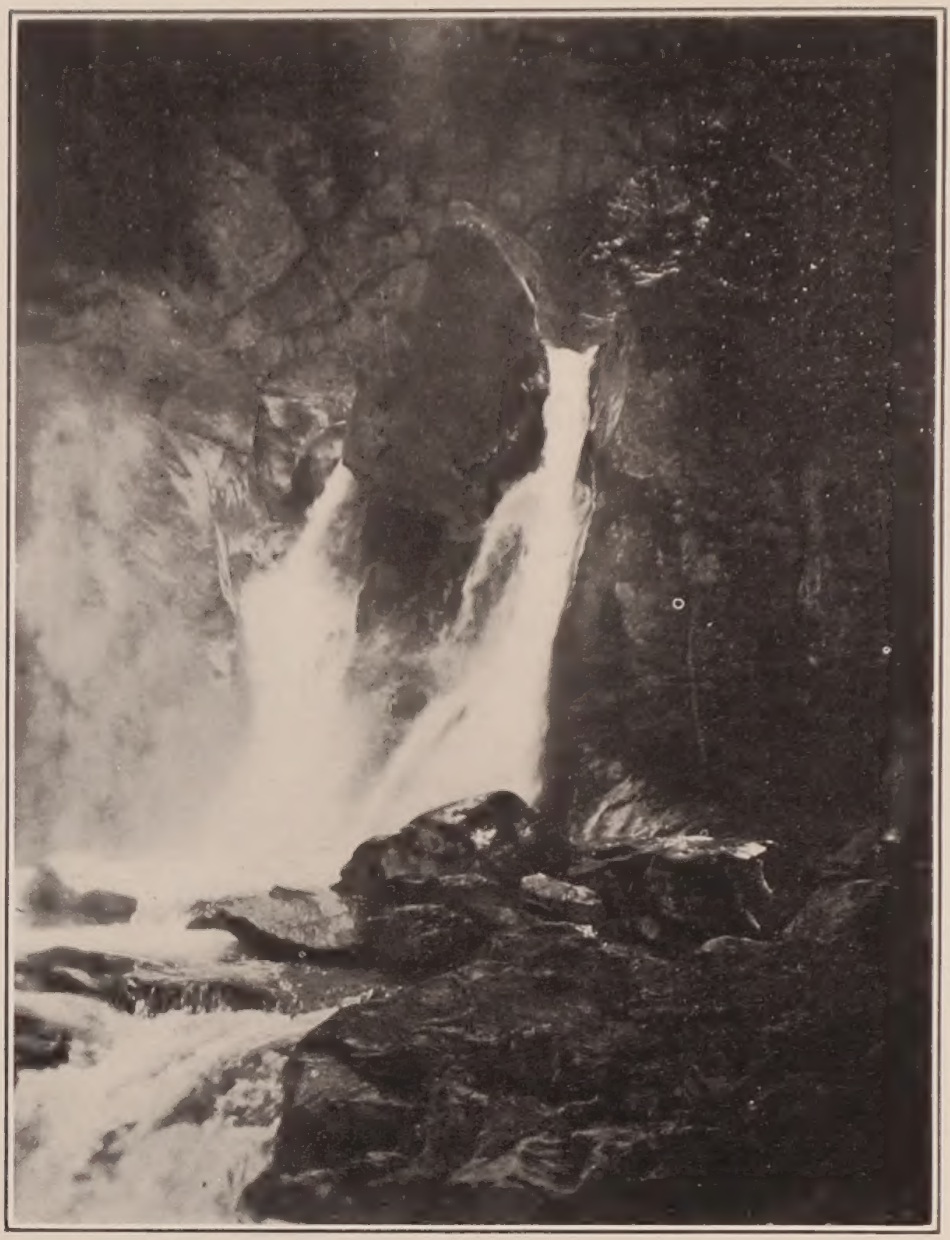
"You say that it might not have been a robin? Mercy, man,
If I can't tell a robin I would like to know who can!
It wasn't any whippoorwill or hen or stork or crane.
A man who cannot pick out birds gives me an angling pain.
Oh, yes, he was some skinny and his feathers they were rough,
But for all that I know it was a robin right enough."

From N.Y. Sun 23 Febry. 1915, after a particularly mild and beautiful Washington's birth-day, when I was out without an overcoat.

RB

deep. 121.

AN OLD FLY BOOK AND OTHER STUFF



(*Page 87*)

BASH BISH FALLS

AS if above the limpid pool,
Across the rock which there o'erhung,
Shy Daphne from the waters cool
Her snowy veil had flung,—

An Old Fly Book And Other Stuff

BY

JOHN WARREN HARPER

R. S. PECK & CO., Inc.,
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TO
MY MOTHER

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J. W. H.

Hartford, Conn.
1912

CONTENTS

FISHING VERSE

The Cast 11
An Old Fly Book 12
The Twitchin' o' the Elbow 16
"The Call of the Wild" 18
The Little Red Barn Over East . . . 22
Suppose 25
The Yarn 28
My Love 32
An Old Fishing Hat 35
The One That Got Away 36
Only a Quiet Pool 40
In Canada 42
On Grand Lake Stream 43
A Day Off 44
A Meditation 47
The End of the Trout Season 49
To a Wild Rose 51
Jes' a Dreamin' 54
Regrets 56
The Last Cast 58
A Query 60
A Fable 62
He Never Took a Vacation 63

OTHER VERSE

The Exile 67
Evening on Moosehead Lake 71
The Coming of Winter 72

The Storm 75
The Passing of Autumn 76
The Song of the Kennebec 77
March in April 80
Winter Sunrise 83
Belgrade 84
Bash Bish Falls 87
Duck Shooting in October 88
Mars Mawch 89
The Open 93
The Wreck 95
To a Wild Rose by the Sea 97
A Church 100
Spring Song 102
The Robber 103
The Forest 105
Mount Bigelow in Maine 106
A March Sunset 107
Sunset and Night 109
Katama 111
The Connodaguinet 116
To the Sea 120
The First Robin 121
Winter in the Lap of Spring 122
Indian Summer 125
Before the Toy Window 127
Duck Shooting at Saybrook 132
The Song of the Wind 133
A Cowboy's Wooing 136
A Rainy May 139
To a Wood Thrush 141
To a Cricket 143
An Alaskan Cathedral 152

FOREWORD

It will not have taken the reader long to have discovered that the author of this little volume is an ardent lover of trout and salmon fishing. He begs to acknowledge the soft impeachment and to state that it was primarily written for those who love "the gentle art of angling," but to which has been added "Other Stuff" to give it a wider range of appeal to all those who love the open. The piece *Before the Toy Window,* while not strictly in keeping with the tenor of the book, is placed herein at the special request of friends who desire to keep it in more permanent form than a newspaper clipping.

THE CAST

OUT into the world this little book
I cast—perchance to an unfriendly fate.
Not poetry's fine feather'd hook
I use, but rather that more humble bait
Of simple rhyme—Yet am I bold
To place the hope upon each line
That you may "strike," perchance take hold,
And all your kindly thoughts be mine.
So, like the boy whose only lure
A worm and pin which he had bent
And "shiners" caught—like him I'm sure
If this, my cast, appeal to you,
And I can land a smile or two,
I am content.

AN OLD FLY BOOK

IT lies there on the table, it is faded, old, and worn,
Its pages turn'd to yellow now are water stain'd and torn;
Some fray'd out flies are in it and a leader and a line,
And about a thousand memories in this old fly book of mine.

For it somehow sets me dreaming in the fire-light's flickering glow,
And the summer seems to come again that died so long ago;
I forget that it is winter with the sleet against the pane,
For it takes me back to Canada, it takes me back to Maine.

It is silent with an eloquence that is louder far than words,
I can see the ripples dancing, I can hear the song of birds,

And there comes an air as bracing as a glass of
musty wine,
And the chalice fond that holds it is this old fly
book of mine.

There are some who strive for shekels, for piastres
and for pelf,
And too soon they go to pieces and are laid
up on the shelf;
But for me I find my riches in that larger
brotherhood,
Of the grand life-giving open, of the stream,
the field, the wood.

So to-night my thoughts go wandering with a
sort of wayward will
Like the breeze that bends the clover as it sweeps
across the hill,
And a love of nature haunts me with a worship
half divine,
As I turn again the pages of this old fly book
of mine.

For it takes me back in fancy to the scenes I
used to know,
Grand Lake Stream and Montmorency, Table
Rock at Kineo;
With my guides I pole a "dug out" up the
wild Miramichi,

Stopping now to try a bright fly for a salmon
from the sea.

There behind that rock I cast it where the eddies
seem to curl,
I can see the " rise " that follow'd, I can see the
mighty swirl,
And the leap out in the sunshine like a bar of
silver fine,
My first salmon on a Jock Scott from this old
fly book of mine.

And it brings back Lake Chepednuk and the
wilds of Pirate Brook,
The rapids of Clearwater where a four pound
trout I took;
From Roberval to Tadousac and a pool I long'd
to try,
But I didn't—'twas a hatchery—and that's the
reason why.

And mountain guarded Moosehead with its mists
of early morn,
And the long, wide dam at Wilson's where the
Kennebec is born,
The Frenchman's and High Landing and the
pool beneath the pine.
Like friends they come to greet me in this old
fly book of mine.

So I care not for the wint'ry blast that whistles
shrill without,

For to-night I've caught the salmon and the
speckl'd squaretail trout,
And from out the page of memory comes a ne'er
forgotten day,
Like the grand old top of Spencer o'er the mists
of Lilly Bay.

There's a fray'd out Silver Doctor and a Parma-
chenee Belle,
They have lured the speckled beauty and they
cast o'er me their spell
With their memories of a brooklet that around
my thoughts entwine,
And I seem to hear it rippling through this old
fly book of mine.

So I muse before the firelight in my library alone,
O'er this faithful vade mecum with a charm
that's all its own,
And the reason for my dreaming you'll not find
hard to guess,
In these feeble lines I've written and the mean-
ing they express.

I have volumes more pretentious standing stately
in a row,
And some sets of fairish bindings that I'm rather
pleas'd to show,
I can see within the firelight their gilded titles
shine,
But—it's a different grip that holds me in this
old fly book of mine.

THE TWITCHIN' O' THE ELBOW

WHEN I look out o'er the medders
From the winter brown and bare,
An' the river overflowin'
From the snow a-melting there,
When the air is kinder milder,
An' the sky is full o' blue,
An' it looks like spring is comin'
An' the signs all say it's true,
Then I kinder see a brooklet
Flowing 'mong the hills o' pine,
An' I git a kind o' twitchin'
In thet right elbow o' mine.

When old March ca'ms down a leetle
An' the days go, one by one,
An' the snow's a-disappearin'
'Neath the warmin' o' the sun,
Then I take my leetle bamboo
From its peg upon the wall,
Kinder jes' look through my fly book,
Gnat and Midget, Montreal,
An' I see the dancin' ripples

Flashin' back the sun an' shine,
An' I git a kinder twitchin'
In thet right elbow o' mine.

Yes, thet's it! The brook off yonder
Over east behind the barn,
An' now, neighbor, you jes' listen
While I'm spinnin' this here yarn.
When ole March hez quit his howlin',
An' the first o' Aprile comes,
Jes' as sure as you're a livin'
An' hez fingers, toes an' thums—
Wal I kinder somehow reckon,
Thar you'll find me, rain or shine,
An' thet twitchin' aggervated
In thet right elbow o' mine.

"THE CALL OF THE WILD"

I HEARD it above the noise of the street,
Come away! Come away!
Above the sound of hurrying feet,
The burden, the toil, and the noonday heat,
And as I listen'd it seem'd to say,
Give up "the cares that infest the day,"
Come away! Come away!

I heard it above the newsboy's cry,
Come away! Come away!
It floated in at my window high,
The North Wind left it in passing by,
And fainter and far grew the city's din
And only that "still small voice within,"
Come away! Come away!

Below an organ ground out its tune,
Let it play! Let it play!
But to me there came the cry of the loon
Far out on the lake in the wane of the moon,
And there on the shore where the shadows lay,
The call of the moose across the bay,
Come away! Come away!

It came afar off from the border land,
Far away! Far away!
Where the pines and the firs like sentinels stand,
And the deer come out on the spit of sand,
Where the heron wings his lumbering flight,
And the eagle looks down from his eyrie height,
Come away! Come away!

And the song of the rapids came back to me,
Come away! Come away!
Of the Kennebec and the Miramichi
As they rush'd on their bounding way to the sea,
And they sang—"Our pools are wide and deep
Where the 'squaretails' lie and the salmon leap,
Come away! Come away!"

And I saw the trail thro' the wilderness,
Lead away! Lead away!
From the worry and fret and the cares that press,
To the balsam and pine that heal and bless,
Where the forest shall know and understand,
On our fever'd soul lay her cooling hand,
Come away! Come away!

Come away to the calm of the evening light,
Come away! Come away!
Where shadows gather and tents stand white
And the back log burns far into the night,

While the faithful stars their vigils keep,
Come away to the silence and dreamless sleep,
Come away! Come away!

And all thro'the day as I listen'd and heard,
Come away! Come away!
The blood in my veins was strangely stirr'd,
And my soul reach'd out like a captive bird
That hears a cry from a cloudless sky,
The call of the free as his mates go by,
Come away! Come away!

Then loud and yet still louder it grew,
Come away! Come away!
On the shore is ready your old canoe,
And the guides with their packs are waiting for you,
There's the salmon's leap and the singing reel,
There's the bending rod and that thrilling " feel,"
Come away! Come away!

There's the pipe and the yarn 'round the old camp fire,
Come away! Come away!
There's the song as the flames leap high and higher,
And then came the longing and fierce desire,
Like a mother's passionate cry for her child,
That entered my soul—'twas the call of the wild,
Come away! Come away!

And I answered as possibly you would do,
I obey! I obey!
And around my office I straightway flew,
And behaved somewhat like a madman too,
And then? Well! I just bang'd the window down,
On the door pinn'd the legend—"Out of Town"
Gone away! Gone away!

THE LITTLE RED BARN OVER EAST

IT is only a little old fashion'd red barn,
Of all other red barns it's the least,
But round it there hovers the fisherman's yarn,
And it stands on a hill over east.

There's a mystery hangs o'er this little red barn,
And it may be my feelings you'll share,
By the brook or the river, the pond, or the tarn,
'Tis the will-o'-the-wisp of despair.

For when to entice the sly speckled trout
To the side of the brook I may steal,
Go tramping all day, come home tired out,
With a " limited " few in my creel—,

It may happen a brother I meet on the way,
And together to town we may ride,
And I ask " Well, brother, what luck for the day?"
And he lifts up the creel at his side—

And then for an answer he raises the lid,
Ye shade of Ike Walton! I cry,

A dozen fine beauties by grasses half hid,
And every one caught with a fly.

Ah! I still see the twinkle that lights up his eyes,
When I ask where he caught this rare feast,
And the smile, half concealed, as he slowly replies,
"Oh, behind the red barn over east."

And I who all day the alders had fought
And struggled to push my way through,
Had sung hymns whenever my line had got caught,
(As you know all good fishermen do)—

Was delighted to hear this kind brother add,
And I'm sure that 'twas no idle boast,
Of the beauties that lay there before me he had
Caught them all in an hour at the most.

But not alone trout, be it pickerel, bass,
And no matter what time of the year,
If I ask where they caught them, the answer, alas!
Is the "little red barn" that I hear.

Then I said—"I will find it! The secret I'll know,
There is surely a way if a will,"

But that my dear reader, was long, long ago,
And that omen I'm looking for still.

Well, I now give it up, might as well be re-
sign'd,
And the size of my creel's not increas'd,
But you bet I would give my last dollar to find
That "little red barn" over east.

SUPPOSE

SUPPOSE that you were tired out,
And somewhat nervous state were in,
From all the tumult and the shout,
The city's roar, the endless din,
And when the day was sticky hot,
Upon your tired senses stole
The picture of a far off spot,
Like balm upon your wearied soul.
A spot where ne'er a care might press,
A longing keen as sharpest pain,
The blessing of the wilderness,
The forests deep of Maine.
And on its ponds and tumbling streams,
You saw again, with eager eyes,
That vision of an angler's dreams,
A "squaretail's" break and rise,
A spot that trolleys ne'er might know,
Where telephones might never ring,
And you pack'd up, resolved to go
And just cut loose from everything.
Suppose that you had come from far,
Had traveled leagues by night and day,

At last gave up your Pullman car
To travel by the buckboard way,
O'er stumps and rocks and corduroy,
Your seat far from a bed of clover,
Your every thought, and wits employ
To keep yourself from toppling over.
Again you change, the paddle's plash,
That swiftly speeds your light canoe,
On " West Branch " or the " Allagash,"
Is music to your guide and you.
And then the carry and the trail,
You push along with footsteps rude,
And dare to lift the sacred veil
Of that unbroken solitude.
At last you reach your journey's end,
And then with expectation fond,
Once more your eager eyes you bend
Upon that long sought, favorite pond,
Whose solemn shore of pine and fir,
Upon its mirror'd surface lies,
And there! Ah! how your pulses stir!
The widening circle of a " rise."
Impatient now with keen desire
That runs along each tingling vein,
It seems your very soul's afire,
To try your wonted luck again.
And now your rod with haste take out,
Whose guides the line runs quickly through,
Your'e sure it is a four pound trout

That's out there waiting—just for you.
And then! Oh, well—suppose you found,
You who a hundred leagues had come,
With squaretails rising all around,
You'd left your book of flies—at home!
What would you say? What would you do?
O, brother in your sore distress?
What would you say?—that's *entre nous,*
I do not know—but—I might guess. (!)

THE YARN

WAL! it happened up at Moosehead,
This here yarn I'm 'bout to spin,
But perhaps you're incredoolus,
Not the kind to take it in.
All right, stranger, which is meanin',
No offense need here be took,
At the spinnin' of this fish yarn,
Written in this little book.
It war on the dam at Wilson's,
Or to make it still more plain
The East Outlet of Old Moosehead,
Which is way up North in Maine,
Whar the lake from out the darkness,
An' the mists o' airly morn,
Goes a shootin' through the sluices
An' the Kennebec is born.
We war on the dam at Wilson's,
Ole Jim Jackman, him and I,
And war sittin' thar a fishin',
Sort o' castin' of a fly
Towards the rock—perhaps you know it!
Wal, 'bout sixty feet away
From the apron 'neath the sluices

Whar the great big squar' tails lay,
I had on a Silver Doctor,
An' a Parmachenee Belle,
An' our luck 'twan't very likely,
I'd been castin' for a spell
An' war kinder leanin' over
When I saw a dorsal fin,
An' a squar' tail took my Doctor,
Gave one strike, an' yanked me in.
Down I went into the rapids,
And I heard one yell from Jim,
Jim war nachurly excited
Fer he knew I couldn't swim.
An' the place, p'raps you know it,
Seen the rips from the big sluice,
You'll agree, I'm kinder thinkin',
Thet for swimmin' 'tain't much use.
Past the rock I went a rushin',
In my ears a roar an' hum,
An' I dimly sort o' reckoned
My last day had shorely come.
Wal, it didn't, strange to tell it!
An' this here's the reason why,
That's presoomin' thar's a difference
'Twixt a fish yarn an' a lie.
Wal, you see as I went over,
An' went plungin' down below,
I held on to that air fish rod,
And I never let it go.

So it war that on a sudden,
'Fore I knew what 'twar about,
Thet I felt that fish line tighten,
An' my head come bobbin' out,
And then—say! will you believe it?
I went up agin the stream,
Up agin the rips and eddies,
Till I thought 'twar all a dream.
An' thet fish he did the pullin',
Like a tug boat with a tow,
No, it warent rapid transit,
We war movin' mighty slow,
But thet rock war gettin' nearer,
It war 'bout six feet away,
In a moment I would reach it,
I put out my hand when—say!
On a sudden thet line slackened
An' I felt myself go down,
An' agin I sort o' reckoned
Thet this time I'd shorely drown,
Fer you see I knew that squar' tail
'Neath the apron hed reached home,
An' of course the line would slacken,
An' my journey's end hed come.
Wal, I nachurly went under,
Out of sight from head to heel,
In my ears a roar like thunder,
When my left hand struck my reel,
Then a thought like light'ning hit me,
An' you bet I reel'd like sin,

An' just when my breath was leavin',
Wal! my head bobbed out agin.
Up I reeled agin the current
By the rips war knocked about,
Towards the rock until I reached it,
An' exhausted I clum out.
Wal, they fust shet down the sluice gates,
'Twar the only thing to do,
An' then, Jim, he cum and fetched me
Back to shore in his canoe.
An' of course I wa'nt ongrateful
To thet squar' tail for thet tow,
So I took out my old jacknife
Cut the line an' let him go.
But say, stranger, if you're thinkin'
This here yarn is rather thin,
And ain't eddicated to believin'
Thet air squaretail's dorsal fin
War a foot wide longotudal,
Though I didn't measure him,
If you think thet I'm jest lying,
Wal then, stranger,—jest ask Jim.

MY LOVE

MY love is *not* like the red, red rose,
Tho' roses wild hang over,
Woo'd by the vagrant wind that blows
Across the fields of clover.

My love! where oft the droning bee
Vies with its rippling laughter,
My love that runs away from me
The more I follow after.

Far brighter than the tinsel'd feet
Of fairy dancing misses,
My love more lightly leaps to greet
The bending grass with kisses.

The flags, the rushes, spreading bough,
Fond worshippers adoring,
And there—I seem to hear him now,
That thrush his soul outpouring.

The little flirt before whose charms
  Narcissus fair might vainly bend
His knee—elusive to his arms,
  And drive to an untimely end.

So, like Apollo I pursue
  This Daphne e'er anon revealing.
In open meadow running through,
  Or leafy covert stealing.

My love, that smiles and sings to me
  An ever wondrous roundelay,
Of all the summer's witchery,
  To drive my every care away.

Ah, gladsome is the bright refrain
  That kindles hope within the breast,
That sings thro heart and soul and brain
  The song of peace and rest.

And so, whate'er my fortune, lot,
  Whate'er the fate my future be,
When friends desert and I'm forgot,
  Still art thou true to me.

When age shall wither every hope
  And I no longer feel thy thrill,
In memory by some grassy slope
  I'll hear thy singing still.

There by a pool in shaded nook,
  With rod and flies again I'll dally
By thee—my love—my brimming brook,
  My trout brook up the valley.

AN OLD FISHING HAT

IT'S faded and pull'd out of shape,
The band is torn upon it,
With rim turn'd down, it might be call'd
The latest style of bonnet.

A leader with some fray'd out flies,
Is lightly strung around it,
With any other hat on earth
No one would e'er confound it.

My friends all guy me as I pass,
But could their lives begin to know
The joys together we have had,
They'd steal this old chapeau.

Well, let them laugh and let them chaff,
And tho it looks like thunder,
It isn't what's on top your hat,
So much as what is under.

THE ONE THAT GOT AWAY

YES! you had him I know, dear brother!
And your story's familiar and old,
And the tale that you tell's but another
Of a thousand just like it retold.

But then there's a charm round about it,
That somehow we love to repeat,
For what " circle " could e'er do without it,
Or what fish yarn would e'er be complete?

How it happened—can you ever forget it?
And you lost him, but who dares to blame?
For to whom that a trout line e'er wet it,
Is the story not ever the same?

You remember the evening was falling
At the close of a warm day in June,
And the birds to each other were calling,
You had cast through the long afternoon

And your luck—there was no need to show it,
Tho in truth you could do it with pride,
Why one with a half eye might know it
By the hang of the creel at your side.

At the alders, if human, you grumbled,
Like a net work so thickly they grew,
O'er the stones in the brook you had stumbl'd,
And had said—but that's *entre nous!*

When a turn in the course there reveal'd it,
Where the shadows lay darkening and cool,
And the arms of a spruce half conceal'd it,
The wide, lazy swirl of a pool.

Ah! perchance you again stand before it,
And again feel your pulses that thrill'd,
As you carefully cast your flies o'er it,
With throbbings that would not be still'd.

And just where the ripples were curving,
In wide circles right over his lair,
Then, 'neath the deep bank they went swerving,
You cast—and it happened right there.

Can you ever forget it, I wonder,
The dash and the splash of that " rise,"
How he came like an arrow from under,
And snapp'd at the last of your flies?

Do you not hear your reel still singing,
As it sang that June day in your ears?
Will the sound of its song lose its ringing,
Or the music be lost with the years?

And your rod, can you not see it bending,
And your line going up 'gainst the stream?
And the fight that he made, and the ending,
Does it not all come back like a dream?

Yes, you had him, I know, and you play'd him
With all of a fisherman's skill,
Till at last, tired out, you had laid him
Full length on the top of a rill.

Then near and yet nearer you reel'd him,
And now you reached down with your net,
Not even an inch would you yield him,
You thought you had him play'd—and yet

Just as you placed your net under,
With a strength that was born of despair,
He plunged, and was gone, and I wonder
Did you cry or just stand there and—swear?

Well, at least you went home heavy hearted,
And you showed up your luck for the day,
And you told—I can see your hands parted,
Of the one that, alas! got away.

And next day with the "circle" about you,
While they sympathized each on his part,
Your hands—Forgive if I doubt you!
Were just a bit wider apart.

Till at last in each afterward telling
That fish grew so large in the tale,
May I ask—pray pardon my spelling!
Was it trout that you lost or a whale?

But come! pray let us not quarrel
O'er my punning or rudeness of speech,
But rather reflect on the moral,
Your afternoon's outing may teach.

For how oft on life's currents hope dances
Like our flies on a bright summer day,
And the biggest of all of our chances,
How often, alas! gets away!

ONLY A QUIET POOL

ONLY a quiet pool way up in the wilds
of Maine,
Only the world forgot with its worry and fret
and pain,
And long lost youth come back, only a boy again.

Only the edge of the rips, only your guide and
you,
Only a "rise" out there from the bow of your
old canoe,
Only a thrill at the heart, only a cast or two.

Only the strike and the plunge of a gamey square-
tail trout,
Only the song of the reel as the line goes spinning
out,
Only the strain of the rod, only the fear and
doubt.

Only a gallant fight and a prize within your net,
Only a paddle home while the sunset lingers yet,
Only a rare "day off" it seems you will ne'er
forget.

And when on long winter nights in the firelight's
flickering glow,
" When the wind goes woo " up the chimney flue
and piles high the drifting snow,
When on the wall the shadows tall like phan-
toms come and go

Perchance to you this scene anew, while the storm
beats 'gainst the pane,
In the fitful gleams of firelight dreams may all
come back again,
Of shadows cool and a quiet pool way up in the
wilds of Maine.

IN CANADA

MY friend, do you know what it is to feel
The plunge of a gamey trout?
To hear the sound of the whirring reel
As the line goes singing out?
To cast a fly o'er a deep, dark pool
Where the salmon makes his lair,
And draw from its shaded depths and cool
A silver flash in the air?
What! such joys have never come your way,
And you really mean it, too?
Well, then, my friend, all I have to say
Is—*I'm mighty sorry for you.*

ON GRAND LAKE STREAM

DAR'S a salmon in dat pool
Yaas dar be!
An' dat salmon ain' no fool
Yo heah me!
I done struck him wif a fly,
He done leap up fo foot high,
Shook he's haid and say'd—Goodbye!
Las' I see!

A DAY OFF

I AM ten miles up the valley, I am ten miles far away
From the smoke fog of the city and the cares of every day;
There is sunshine all about me from a cloudless sky of blue,
There's a meadow green before me and a brooklet running through,
And a rod and creel beside me on a mystic afternoon,
'Mid the teeming life of summer in the glorious month of June.

I'm sure I neither know nor care if "school keeps up or not,"
I only know I am aware of this most restful spot;
I only know there by the woods on yonder chestnut tree
Is a squirrel, saucy rascal, and he's scolding hard at me;
I only know a tiny wren the brush is darting through,
The little witch, I'm sure, with me is playing peek-a-boo.

And there on yon shy wild rose clings a rascal robber bee,
Was ever in broad daylight such a daring thievery?
The stately fir tops saw it and they told it to the breeze
In whispers like the murmur of far off summer seas.
And as with dripping booty he pass'd me with his theft,
I forgave the rascal rover for the fragrance that he left.

Oh, yes! I have some "beauties" that fell victims to my fly,
And there's a pool that's tempting—I shall try it by and by,
But it isn't all in fishing for some wary, sly old trout,
And heavy creels fill'd to the top you hear them tell about
That the charm is altogether, for fishing's but a part
Of a meaning, richer, deeper, that is hid in nature's heart.

For there comes a feeling o'er us that in vain we would control,
That sets the blood to leaping and grips hard upon the soul,

A brook, a bit of sunshine, and a woodsy path
that led
To open fields and meadows with a bobolink o'er-
head,
'Tis the witchery of the open that in vain we
would define,
May it enter into your soul as it entered into
mine.

I've been ten miles up the valley, I've been ten
miles far away,
I am back now in the city at the close of one rare
day,
But I've felt the pulse of nature, and I've heard
her heart throbs beat
And a wild rose from the brook side still sends out
its fragrance sweet,
And I drink its draughts of nectar as I put away
my rod,
I've been ten miles up the valley, I've been ten
miles nearer God.

A MEDITATION

WHY is it, when vacation ends,
And I come home and tell my friends
Where I have been the while;
How in the woods I've knock'd about
And salmon caught and square tail trout,
They smile?

No matter what I do or say,
That same old smile! Now tell me, pray!
Is every fish yarn full of guile?
I tell how many fish I've caught,
They say, "Oh, yes! Where were they bought?"
And smile.

I show a salmon, and they scoff,
Or four pound trout I have mark'd off
On paper—all in proper style,
I even show the blood and slime,
"Oh! What an artist!" then they chime,
And smile.

They smile as though my only wish
To have them think I caught a fish
A little less than half a mile
Salveolinus fontanalis,
Two pounds, they take cum grano salis,
And smile.

I shouldn't wonder even though
I took a Notary with me so
An affidavit I might file,
To show my friends, they still would laugh,
Give me a look and idle chaff.
And smile.

Well, let them laugh, but he laughs best
Who laugheth after all the rest,
So I my fancy do beguile,
When I recall a day and when
I see that salmon leap again,
I smile.

THE END OF THE TROUT SEASON

IT is over now, the season,
And we hang the empty creel,
For the law is now the reason
For the silence of the reel.

We put away our "four ounce"
For our wandering steps have ceas'd
To follow that rare brooklet
By the red barn over east.

There's the pathway thro the clover
On the banks so worn and trod,
There're the buttercups and daisies
With their ever friendly nod,

And the wild rose with its fragrance
On the desert air now spent,
Are they waiting for our coming,
Do they look in wonderment?

There's the squirrel with his quarrel
On yonder chestnut high,
And shy Daphne in the laurel
That blush'd as we pass'd by.

There's the brook we follow'd after
With its flashing waters cool,
There's the ripple of its laughter,
There's the ever tempting pool.

But—it's over now—and the reason
Why we put away our flies,
And the only thing now in season
Is to sit and—swap our lies.

TO A WILD ROSE

(On the Way to the Brook.)

WILD ROSE by the dusty way,
I would linger, I would stay,
For in vain could I pass by
Such rare beauty, sweet and shy.
I, too, would my homage pay
Like my ancient rival, he
Dallying Mr. Bumble Bee
In his coat of black and yellow,
Busy, bustling, burly fellow.
Flirt he is as I can prove him,
Tho' I half suspect you love him,
When you to your heart receive him,
Tho' he lulls you, don't believe him.
He's a rover, come to trifle,
Pretext for your sweets to rifle
All your golden petals sipping,
Hies he then with booty dripping.
See him now in yon field over
Humming love songs to the clover,
Fie! on such a fickle lover.

Wild rose, coyish little maiden,
By the wayside fragrant laden,
Whom the minstrel thrush adoring
All his soul to thee outpouring;
Whom the South Wind o'er the rushes
Kiss'd thy cheeks to pinkest blushes,
And the firefly from the meadow
Stealing on the evening shadow,
Softly to thy quiet sleeping,
With his lantern comes a-peeping
Wild rose, lo! I bend the knee,
I, too, would thy lover be,
I would worship at thy shrine,
Favorite little flower of mine.
I would know the mystery,
What the secret of thy birth,
How from out this dull brown earth,
Which I trample 'neath my feet,
Came such fragrance, rare and sweet;
Chalice which I fondly hold,
Fairer than the cups of gold,
Fill'd with sweetest nectar rare,
Poured by Hebe's hand most fair,
As I drink my soul is thrill'd
By thy perfume there distill'd,
And reluctant leave thy side,
Calm'd, refresh'd, and satisfied.
But thy secret could I know
How such beauty e'er could grow

Out of earth's dull somber clod,
I should go my way a God.
Yet this lesson have I gain'd
Through thy secret unattain'd,
Wild rose, if like thee, could I
To some weary passerby
On life's hard and dreary road,
Cheer his heart and lift his load
By some kindly word or deed,
Fragrant in the hour of need,
I am sure my life like thine,
Flow'ret, would be more divine.

JES' A DREAMIN'

JES' a kinder, sorter dreamin'
When the work o' day is done.
Jes' a lookin' up the valley
In the settin' o' the sun,
Whar a clump o' tall, dark fir trees
Stand against the evening sky,
Jes' a dreamin' o' the spring time
Thet am comin' by and by.
Jes' a dreamin'!

Jes' a sorter, kinder dreamin'
Of a brook behind the hill,
In the sunlight flashin', gleamin'
Thro the quiet medders still.
Jes' a lookin' o'er a fly book,
Jes' a fingerin' a rod,
Jes' a dreamin' o' a pathway
Whar the clover used to nod,
Jes' a dreamin'!

Jes' a kinder, sorter dreamin
Of the spring time come again,

When the trees are all a buddin'
And the frogs are cheepin' — then
Jes' a scootin' up the valley
On an airly morning car
To thet brook behind "the red barn,"
Wal! I reckon I'll be thar,
Thet ain't dreamin' !

REGRETS

HANG up the rod, wind up the reel!
Throw out the bit of faded clover
That clings yet to the empty creel,
For trouting days are over.

The merry, tumbling, laughing brook,
Whose course I follow'd after,
Where every care I straight forsook,
Still calls in rippling laughter.

I've follow'd it through field and wood
In every form and stress of weather.
How well I know its every mood,
So oft we've chumm'd together.

And where it spread out in a pool
The mirror'd trees and skies revealing,
Within its shadow'd depths and cool
The wary trout concealing—

There, where the ripples made a swerve
  And sank beneath the surface smiling,
Beyond the larger, outer curve
  I cast my flies beguiling.

The dash, the splash, the bending rod,
  That "feel" — whoever can forget it?
That e'er a trout brook ever trod
  Or line, whoever wet it?

The homeward tramp, the fir tipp'd hill,
  A full moon rising grandly o'er it,
The lone cry of the whippoorwill,
  A creel—none happier load e'er bore it?

The brook, the ripples, pools, ah me!
  That left in tears the bending rushes,
The wild rose, that the ardent bee
  Its cheeks had kiss'd to pinkest blushes

Are there, all there, they call—and yet—
  Why I can't go you may discover;
The law is on—hence my regret
  That trouting days are over.

THE LAST CAST

I KNEW he lived beneath the spruce,
Indeed, I knew it all along,
Or if I really did not know,
I had, at least suspicion strong.
Because in such a deep, dark pool,
A lusty trout, if anywhere,
I felt, within its shadows cool
Would make his hiding place and lair.
And so it was I made my cast
With hope and fear alternate blended,
What chance I had would be my last,
For with the day the season ended.
Out flew my flies across the swirl,
Above the ripples' rise and fall,
Out where the eddies curve and curl
Beneath the bank o'erhanging all.
But no response my efforts met,
What! Could it be he was not "in"?
Must hope give way to keen regret
And expectation to chagrin?
Another cast close by some foam
O'er which my flies I gently drew,
A flash! Ah, yes! He was "at home,"
He struck at last and—I struck, too.

The fight was on, against my skill
  He pitted all his lusty strength;
My bending rod, I feel it still,
  A-quiver throughout all its length.
With lunge and plunge beneath the rips,
  Ah! 'twas a gallant fight he made,
I felt it in my finger tips,
  Against the skill that I display'd.
Ah! brothers of the rod and creel,
  I'm sure you will not read amiss!
I ask—you who have known that "feel,"
  What moment so supreme as this?
But all things end, I had him "play'd,"
  At thought of which my hopes increas'd,
A fight like that — I'm sure he weigh'd—
  Well, I should say a pound at least.
A royal prize, no fingerling,
  Compell'd by law to throw him back,
Ah! long his praises would I sing,
  When — suddenly my line grew slack.
How may my feelings best be term'd?
  To cry or swear? But — what's the use?
Suspicion was at least confirmed;
  I know—he lives beneath the spruce.

A QUERY

WHY is it when I go up the street,
And every friend I chance to meet,
No matter what the time of day,
His greeting always puts this way:
"Been fishing yet?"

No sooner do I venture out
Upon the street and go about
My business than I straightway hear
That same old grind smite on my ear:
"Well! how are the trout biting?"

That same old question o'er and o'er,
I've heard it forty times or more
Since the first day of April came,
Varied in form, but all the same,
'Bout fishing.

"Great Cæsar dead and turn'd to clay"!
Ye friends and Romans, tell me, pray!
Am I Ike Walton's shade or spook,
To spend my life along a brook
In fishing?

I'll bet four cents,—you needn't laugh!—
I can foretell my epitaph
Upon my tomb when I am dead;
This simple line will there be read:
" Here lies a fisherman."

Somewhat ambiguous, I admit,
Depends on whether said or writ,
So your hic jacet I'll forgive
If you don't say it—while I live,
Thanks, awfully!

Well, yes! my friend, I have been out,
Just twice and caught two fair-sized trout,
Alas! my club dues thus far teach
They cost 'bout fifteen dollars each,
My fishing.

A FABLE

IN a dank green tarn a frog one day
Sat basking in the sun,
When a man with a rod came along that way
And that frog he look'd upon.
And he dangled a rod and some worsted red
O'er the frog who saw with a grin,
"Why, what a beautiful, strange new fly," he said,
And—"Methinks I will take you in."
And this frog did just what he thought he should do,
And that, you may know, is the reason why
His legs on this plate are now served to you
In a delicate well done fry.
And tho his companions may sadly miss
This frog from the dank green tarn,
His fate may but teach that the moral is this,
Don't swallow, we pray, every yarn.

"HE NEVER TOOK A VACATION"

HE never took a vacation, he hadn't the time, he said,
It was off to the "grind" in the morning,
It was home, and the papers and bed,
'Twas the desk, or the office, or counter,
Where he fought out his battles with men,
He would work just a few years longer,
Then quit, "take it easy," and then—?

So he toiled and he moiled and struggl'd,
Nor knew that the gods of gain
Drank deep of the wine he proffer'd,
The blood of his heart and brain;
Nor knew while he piled up his millions,
And gathered his bags of gold,
His friends said at forty "he's ageing,"
At fifty they said "he is old."

He never took a vacation, and at sixty they read his will,
His day for "retiring from business"
Death wrote in a codicil;
And pinn'd on the door of his office
Was a notice which grimly read,
"Out of town—on a long vacation! Indefinite" it said.

OTHER VERSE

Just Around the Corner

THE EXILE

With permission from *Scribner's Magazine*

I AM down in Arizona,
On its cactus cover'd plains,
The white plague on my hollow cheeks,
Its fever in my veins.
They sent me from a far land
To this arid, vast expanse,
Where they said the air was drier
And a fellow had a chance,
Where your upper lip grows shorter,
And you cough and catch your breath,
Where you ride a bucking broncho
'Gainst a swift, pale horse and Death.

I am down upon the desert,
'Tis a God forsaken land,
Where you fight with odds against you,
When you've taken your last stand.
Where you live out in the open,
'Mong the sage brush and mesquite,
With a rattler for a neighbor,
Not the friendliest to meet.

Where you fling yourself upon a bunk
To rest your weary head,
And you shake the blooming scorpions
From the covers of your bed,
And it strikes you that it's rather tough
To live in such a spot,
Exiled from home and friendships
In a land that God forgot.

They say this country, way down here,
Is full of precious gold,
Its mountains filled with silver,
And with countless wealth untold.
But I know another country,
And my heart with longing fills,
Where the gold is in the sunset
Upon its purple hills.
Where the silver's in a brooklet,
And it's set with emerald too,
As it flashes in the sunlight
Of the meadow stealing through.
A country — God's own country,
And my own to sacrifice,
Some call it fair New England,
But I call it — Paradise.

'Tis Thanksgiving in New England,
'Tis the dear old homeland feast,
And like a Moslem way down here,
My prayers are toward the East.

The neighbors that I knew so well,
I seem to see them still,
Are winding in procession
To the white church on the hill.
There's the greeting at the doorway,
There's the dear old family pew,
And the dearest faces in it,
That a lonely man e'er knew,
And a sweet face in the choir,
And a hand I long to press,
Oh God! to hold her close again,
As when she whispered — "Yes."
Thanksgiving Day! how it comes back
While memory's fancies weave,
And — I wonder how that wet spot
Got there upon my sleeve!

Oh, I look out o'er the sage brush,
As I stretch my yearning hands
O'er the long, unbroken reaches,
Of the desert's burning sands
To a land where brooks are honest
When your lips are parched and dry,
Not the canyon's clear, deceptive streams
Of tasteless alkali,
New England has no mountains
Full of wealth and mines and drills,
But I'd give this whole damn'd country
For one sight of its green hills.

I am down in Arizona,
And I'm told I've got to stay
Till the Angel Gabriel blows his trump
Out on the Judgment Day.
I've been here three years already,
And the white plague's held in check,
And my broncho and the pale horse
Are going neck by neck.
And this country with its dry air,
May after all be right,
Where the stars are brilliant candles
On the altars of the night—
But, oh God! for Old New England,
As the lonely years go by,
Let the pale horse beat my broncho,
Take me home and — let me die.

EVENING ON MOOSEHEAD LAKE

ACROSS the lake, far down the west,
Behind the forest's dark'ning spires,
Like flambeaus of resplendent fires
Held high aloft—day sinks to rest.
Down the wide reaches of the sky
That stretch away in amber seas
The clouds like golden argosies
Full sail'd at quiet anchor lie.
Now o'er the waters' gilded wake
A heron, with low lumbering flight,
To some lone shore of fading light,
Wings to his rest within the brake.
The twilight falls and fades the sight,
Save a low, lingering yellow bar
Of light where hangs one lambent star,
Swung o'er the gateway of the night.
Silence and deepening solitude,
And darkness over wold and wild,
As sleep falls on a tired child,
When suddenly as if in mockery rude
From yonder spectral mists beneath the moon
A cry as if from out the underworld,
Upon the quiet of the night is hurl'd,
The wild, weird hollow laughter of the loon.

THE COMING OF WINTER

ACROSS the Northern hills he came,
O'er frozen marsh and leafless wood,
Where yesterday bright Autumn stood
With high uplifted torch aflame.

But yesterday these bare, brown trees,
While yet his shrilling winds were hush'd—
Felt his lean fingers touch — and blush'd
To drop their golden draperies.

Yet strangely where the wild rose gave
Her life upon a fragrant sigh,
His herald winds had pilèd high
The brooding leaves upon her grave.

With icy breath upon the morn,
A frosty mantle white he weaves,
O'er stubble of the gather'd sheaves,
And silver'd tassels of the corn.

His dirges by the river's edge,
He plays on broken pipes of Pan,
The shivering ripples heard and ran
To hide affrighted 'mid the sedge.

The rabbit too prick'd up his ears
Within the swamp grass where he lay,
And woke to make his trembling way
Among a million frosted spears.

Within her home the meadow mouse,
Upon the North wind heard his shriek
Above her own affrighted squeak,
Nor dared to look from out her house.

For me—I smiled, for well I knew
His reign at most could not be long,
Again shall lift the lark's sweet song,
From meadows where his coursers flew.

Again a shy, sweet living thing,
A Dryad 'neath the leaves asleep,
From out some violet shall peep,
And earth shall wake and call it—Spring.

What wonder then I smiled, although
He swiftly charged adown the hills,
Across the frozen marsh and rills,
And gave my cheek a stinging blow?

For after him come daffodils,
And plaintive strain of bluebird trills,
The gladness in the air that thrills
The robin's warbling note—and so

I watch'd with unaffrighted eye,
His shrilling steeds go flying by
From out a chilling, leaden sky,
His flying, vanguard flakes of snow.

THE STORM

A SHRIEK! a roar!
Fierce snarling winds that bore
Thick mists of drifting snow,
A Nor' East winter blow
On sea and shore.

Wild day and wilder night,
A fisher's feeble light,
A sleeping babe at rest,
And 'gainst the window press'd
A woman's face all white.

Wide stretch of beach and lone,
The sea's deep undertone,
The morning clear.
Wreckage and broken mast,
A frozen thing lash'd fast,
A life guard near.

Bright room and laughing child,
Fair skies and breezes mild,
Departed storm;
Behind—a bowèd head,
And claspèd arms o'erspread
A silent form.

THE PASSING OF AUTUMN

AS if some priestess fair had stolen 'mong
The forest's templ'd arches high and wide
And there her outer robes had cast aside,
O'er bush and tree her scarlet mantle flung
From branch to branch her yellow girdle strung,
Then 'mid the asters went her silent way
Up to the altars of the hills to pray,
And o'er the drowsy vale her censer swung,
When lo! one morn the wanton breeze,
While thus at her devotions lost she stood,
With frosty fingers stole her draperies,
But in the deeper hollows of the wood,
With guilty haste the thieving wind
Her golden sandals left behind.

THE SONG OF THE KENNEBEC

CHILD of a Northern lake am I, Moosehead the mother that bore,
Cradled 'mong pines that pierce the sky, fring'd with a wilderness shore.
Christen'd in arms of the evening mists, altar "Old Squaw" at Marrs,
Censer the moon, chorister loon, candles just God's own stars.

Child of the Outlet wide am I in the land of the pine and the spruce,
While my mother slept then nearer I crept to the open gates of the sluice,
Down the long boom on to my doom, there from her fair breast torn,
Child of the mild, child of the wild, Kennebec was I born.

I am off and away at the break of day, I am off in the noonday heat,
And no one shall stop me, and no one shall stay, or follow my flying feet.

My brother the wind I leave far behind. Ah! vainly he catcheth me,
And my rapids sing and their white arms fling — we are free! we are free! we are free!

I bound along with a laugh and a song and never a care have I,
I steal through the dawn with a face that is wan, I blush 'neath the sunset sky,
When the night winds croon 'neath the crescent moon I sink to my quiet rest,
Where the pool is deep I go to my sleep and I fold the stars on my breast.

I dance and sing where the wild fowl wing their flight 'long the silent shore,
Thro the rock bound gorge I toss and I forge, I plunge in the cataract's roar,
On my bosom wide I bear on my tide my brothers to cloud and rain,
The spruce and the pine, tall brothers of mine, my brothers whom men have slain.

Ah! well for their need and well for their greed, but hearken ye sons of men!
Ye have struck your blow but in time ye shall know a blow shall be given again,
For this is the law and it holdeth no flaw, the law of the forest to learn,

Who the forest shall smite, be it wrong, be it
right, the forest small smite in return.

So I bring ye my woe on my lethal flow, the
forms my wet lips have kiss'd,
In the spectral gleams of the moon's cold beams
and the shroud of the evening mist,
Like a wraith of their doom it steals o'er the boom
to cover the martyrs of gain,
But my free spirit still and my unconquer'd will
ye shall shackle and harness in vain.

For ever and aye, by night and by day, comes a
voice that is calling for me,
When the storm winds wail it floats on the gale,
'tis the voice of my father — the sea.
On the wide, lone beach his white arms reach,
ah! who shall us longer sever,
I go out on the wave to the father that gave, I
am lost in the great Forever.

MARCH IN APRIL

LOOK yeah, Mars Mawch, peahs lak to me
Yo's jes' as jealous ez kin be,
Kase, when I done wek up one mawn,
I see a chile out on de lawn,—
A faih-haihd Missy frum the Souf,
Wif sweet, wahm bref an' tremlin' mouf,
An' in her half-wet, teary eyes
De blue dat drapt frum April skies,
Her hyar done lit wif sunlight beams
Er jes' er flashin' gol'en gleams.
An' ez I wondah who she be
A voice cum out de cherry tree,
Whar Mistah Robin up an' sing,
"Good Mawnin'! Howdy! Missy Spring!"
I rush'd down stahs an' open'd wide
De do' an' den I laff'd an' cried,
"Lawd bress yo, Honey sweet ma chile!
Cum to dese ahms an' res erwhile.
De Missy Spring done cum at las',
Deah Honey, let me hol' yo fas'!"
An' den Mars Mawch he cum erlong,
Kase he am jealous an' so strong,

An' den he roah'd fo' all he's wurf
An' tried to blow her off de yearf.
He blew so hyard, to tell de truf,
He shook de house to lif' de roof.
He howl'd and shriek'd wif all his might
An' done raise Cain fru all de night.
An' when I done wek up nex mawn
De lil' Missy she wah gawn.
De win! he whistle roun' de do'!
"She's gawn! She ain' cum back no' mo'!"
De win', he's nuffin but er bluff,
But she wah done gawn, sho' nuff!
Done scah'd by old Mars Mawch's blow,
De lil' Missy—hidin' low.

I ax'd de crocus by de wall
Whah bright an' wahm de sunbeams fall,
"Did lil' chile pass by dat way?"
De crocus, she look up an' say:
"De lil' Missy Spring — oh! she?
Yo 'clar you doan' know whah she be?
Look down into ma heart an' see,
Look up into dat cherry tree.
Yo heah dat Mistah Robin sing?
Yo see dat blue byaird on de wing?
Yo see de mil'ness in dat sky?
I reckon she cum bime by
De lil' chile, de Missy Spring!
Ertrudgin' o'er dat windy hill

Wif violet an' de daffydil,
An' mek 'em in a nice bokay
An' han' 'em to Mars Mawch an say,
' Please, deah Mars Mawch, please let me stay.' "
An' ef Mars Mawch, wif wintah bref,
Don' try to scah dat chile to def,
No mattah what Brer Woodchuck sayd,
I'll up an' hit 'um on de haid,
" Fo' shame, Mars Mawch! Oh, go to baid! "

A WINTER SUNRISE

ACROSS the snow clad fields, like some pale nun,
Soft to the couch of Night, with features wan,
And icy fingers steals the pallid Dawn
To snuff her paling candles, one by one.
Now with far streamers that outrun
His gilded chariot, 'neath yon kindling slopes
With golden key, Aurora, blushing, "opes
The gates," while Helius, the imperial Sun,
Bursts through, enamour'd of the sleeping night.
With flaming lance across the shimmering sea
Pursues the veilèd goddess in her flight,
And dares to pierce her misty canopy,
But finds, on frosty hill and vale and plain,
The "draperies of her couch" alone remain.

BELGRADE

A SUMMER day, a sky of blue,
A stretch of Belgrade water,
An idly drifting light canoe,
And in it fishing — just we two,
She was the Major's daughter.

The day was warm and rather bright,
Our lines were idly dangling,
Nor flies, nor minnow, helgramite
Could tempt the lordly bass to bite,
The day was poor for angling.

I look'd at my fair *vis-à-vis,*
You will not blame me I am sure,
Because I could not help but see
She was so shy and sweet, ah me!
With downcast eyes demure.

Then to myself, I softly said
If I, alas, catch not a bass
Why not try something else instead?
Ah, what a shapely little head!
Why not — a lass?

Some one will win her, why not I?
I questioned, halfway doubting,
Well, at the least, I could but try,
Perchance to catch her "on the fly,"
In this fair summer outing.

She came of family proud and fine,
What prize was ever grander?
She ended her ancestral line,
My heart was on the end of mine,
With which I hop'd to land her.

The skies were blue and fair above,
Ideal day for wooing!
But no! I did not tell my love,
When she took off a little glove
Alas! 'twas my undoing.

Like ripples flashing in the sun,
Where oft I lov'd to linger,
My suit was lost ere half begun,
I saw a diamond upon
A little telltale finger.

"'Twas ever thus," I softly said,
She saw my looks accusing,
And turn'd aside her pretty head,
And answer'd, "I'm engaged to Fred,"
And then a blush her cheeks o'erspread
Like roses wild suffusing.

A rumbling coach, a farewell view,
A stretch of Belgrade water!
An idly drifting light canoe,
And in it fishing — well, just two,
Fred and the Major's daughter.

BASH BISH FALLS

AS if above the limpid pool,
Across the rock which there o'erhung,
Shy Daphne from the waters cool
Her snowy veil had flung.
Who when Apollo dared obtrude
Upon the still secluded spot,
Fled startl'd thro the silent wood
And left it there—forgot.

DUCK SHOOTING IN OCTOBER

WHILE yet the day was pale and wan,
We crept, with expectations fond,
Down thro the gray and pallid dawn,
Where o'er a small secluded pond
The morn her misty veil had flung,
While dimly through the spectral light
Aurora's rosy fingers clung
Fast to the fleeting robes of night.
We stole as if thro dim lit hall
Of scarlet bush and gilded trees
And crept behind a crumbling wall
Where Autumn hung her tapestries,
Then rose amid the hush profound,
Off went the ducks, not so our gun,
Destruction did not lay around,
Alas! we had the "safety" on.
We turn'd away with feelings crush'd,
The morn peep'd o'er the hills and — blush'd.

MARS MAWCH

WHAT am de mattah wif Mars Mawch,
Ole Mars I ustuh know?
Dat howl'd an' roah'd fo all he's wurf,
An' fill'd de aih wif sno?
De wins dat shriek aroun' de house,
An' down de chimbly flue
Until dey done lif up de roof
An' raise de Debbil too.
Whah is dat bangin' o' de do',
An' whah de shuttahs slam?
Am Mawch a roahin' li'n no mo,
But jes' er peaceful lamb?
De byards am singin' all aroun',
De robin an' de blue,
De crocus peepin' out de groun'
Am sayin' — "Howdy do!"
De sun am brightly shinin',
Dar's a mileness in de sky,
An' der's no one dat's erpinin'
Fo' de wintah done gone by,

An' de worl seems all de gladdah
Fo' de wahm days dat am hyahr,
But — Brer Woodchuck seed he's shaddah
An' am actin' mighty quyahr.

" What am de mattah wif Mars Mawch?"
I ax'd a chile one mawn,
A faih haih'd Missy by my do,
Done playin' on de lawn,
A faih haih'd Missy frum de Sout
While Mistah Robin sing,
An' drapt a wum frum out he's mouf
To call her — Missy Spring.
" I reckon he ain' los'," I sayd,
" He's sho clar out o' season,
Mars Mawch — or mebbe sick in baid,"
" Oh, no! dat ain' de reason,"
Done spoke the faih haih'd lil chile,
" Why he am tame as pigeon,
So quiet, peaceful, an' so mile
Hit's kase he's done got 'ligion."

" Who done got 'ligion?" den I say,
" Mars Mawch — yo's foolin',—chile?
Not ole Mars Mawch, Oh, go away!
Mars Mawch! Dat meks me smile.
Yo sho, chile, dat it ain' no bluff,
Mars Mawch dat howls like sin,
Sho he done chase de Debbil out
An' let de 'ligion in?"

"Yas, sah," de lil' Missy sayd,
"Ise sho it ain' no bluff,
No playin' possum eeder, sah,
He's got it sho enuff.
De thundah shook um up one night
Er rollin' like er drum,
De light'nin' flash'd, he thot dat sho
De Jedgment day had cum.
De thundah he done wek him up,
De rain done melt he's soul,
De Souf win' he done brek him up,
An' drive out all de cole.
An' den he pray'd—'Fogive me, Lawd,
Fo' holing Missy Spring,'
An' den he let me go—I's hyar,
Dat's why de robins sing.
Dat's why de glory roun' about
Am shinin' fru de lan',
Yo heah dat halleloyah shout,
Cum out an' jine de ban'.
The blue byards singin' praises,
Mistah Robin pass de hat
Fo' a fool's cap fo Brer Woodchuck
Dat we all am laffin' at,
Laffin at dat old Brer Woodchuck,
Seed he's shaddah an' he sayed,
'Six weeks mo' o' dis cole weddah,
Reckon I'll gwine back to baid.'
Den we come erlong an' fool um,
Ole Brer Woodchuck — He! He! He!

At he's do' er shoutin' — 'Wek up!
Robin, blue byard, chickadee.'
But Brer Woodchuck in de meddah,
He say nuffin, he lay low,
He done think o' Missy April
'Bout a yahr or two ago,
How Mars Mawch sit down beside her
Laid he's haid wiffin her lap
While upon dis ole backsliddah
Her wahm tears done sofly drap,
How he done git up in fury,
How he's cole win's 'gin to blow,
An' de teahs o' Missy April
How he changed 'em inter sno'.
Doan' yo laff at Ole Brer Woodchuck,
Stan' aroun' he's do' an grin,
'Brer Woodchuck knows Ole Mars's 'ligion,
An' it's sometimes mighty thin,
As fo me — Ole Mars's 'ligion!
Well, I hope dat hit'll las,
But — de win am growin' shapah,
An' dat do — jes' mek it fas'.

THE OPEN

JUST' perchance a breezy hill top,
With a far off stretch of view,
Meads and woods and river sedges,
Mountain range far on the edges,
Where the earth line meets the blue,
Just a day in June—and you.

Just perchance the waving marshes,
Sweeping o'er the lowland leas,
Far out yonder to the seaward,
Just a rag off to the leeward,
'Fore an off shore spanking breeze,
Swung 'twixt two eternities.

Just a tramp across the meadows,
Just the glory of the shine,
Round about you, in and out you,
Just a brook wherein a trout you
Took while casting fly and line;
Just a bobolink upspringing,
Singing, soaring, ever singing,
With a melody divine.

Just a wild rose in the byways,
With its shy and friendly nod,
Shunning the more stately highways,
Where the march of commerce trod,
Just the very joy of living!
With a deep and longdrawn breath,
Like the snapping of your fingers
In the very face of death,
While you look out on the open,
Fling yourself upon the sod,
Just a living, breathing dust speck
In the great workshop of God.

THE WRECK

OUT on the edge of the reef she rides,
Where the billows play and the seagulls cry,
And the seaweed clings to her mold'ring sides,
And fray'd from her mast her halyards fly.

Oh, the day is fair, and the breeze offshore!
'Tis a summer sky and a summer sea,
And idly a rag still flaps at her fore,
And the tide rolls over her lazily.

But what of a day when the Storm King woke
And a Specter stood dark 'gainst the drifting fog?
And what of his fury that o'er her broke
And a Death's hand that wrote out the log?

When the storm was o'er, on the lone beach wide,
What was it lay there — that silent thing?
That the seagulls saw washed up by the tide,
And flew away wondering?

Ah, well for the day that the skies are clear
And yonder the sails go idly by!
But somewhere?—there's a woman's sigh and tear,
And a child looks up and wonders why.

TO A WILD ROSE BY THE SEA

FLOW'RET by the summer sea,
Woo'd by ardent lovers three
Wind and mist and bandit bee,
Jealous of them all, I too,
Linger at thy side to woo,
Join the lists of rivalry.
Fickle are they in their love,
As I here shall straightway prove,
For the wind is but a vagrant,
Telling all thy secrets fragrant,
Whispering of thy shy sweet blushes
To the jealous bending rushes,
Telltale to the flags and grasses
Of thy presence as he passes.
Vainly might the mist conceal thee,
'Twas this tattler first reveal'd thee,
When his breath with perfume laden,
Told thy nearness, pretty maiden,
Which no sooner I espy
Vainly may I pass me by,
Such rare beauty, sweet and shy.
And the mist, the brooding mist,

Second on thy lover's list,
Specter of the pallid dawn,
Steals this rival pale and wan
From the sea to keep his tryst.
Cold and chilling is his breath,
Mantl'd in the shroud of Death,
Comes this spirit of the tide,
Seeking thee to be his bride,
From all others he would hide
Thy sweet presence and enfold
In embraces damp and cold.
But when yon bright, flaming lance
Swift proclaims the day's advance,
Clad in gold and amethyst,
Lo! this lover breaks his tryst,
Leaves thy cheeks which he hath kiss'd
Base deserts and leaves them wet all
With a tear drop on each petal.
Last of all thy lovers three
Cometh now the bandit bee,
Noted for inconstancy.
See the rascal drawing near,
Humming love songs in your ear,
Lulling by his minstrelsy;
He's a roving buccaneer
Passing on from flower to flower,
He demands a fragrant dower,
Sweet confession from each heart,
From a bosom torn apart.

Could you love him, pretty miss,
Such a thieving rogue as this?
Ah! I half suspect you do,
Come now, tell me! Is it true?
But, alas, you'll soon discover
He's a very fickle lover,
Even now your heart deserting,
See him with the clover flirting,
Careless of your feelings hurting.
So my pretty little maid,
Hither where my steps have stray'd,
I, too, my devotion bring,
Come I not for dallying,
Like my fickle rivals three,
Wind and mist and bandit bee.
Bolder am I, too, by far,
And like that young Lochinvar,
He who rode from out the West,
Snatch'd his bride close to his breast,
So! lest thou shouldst droop and pine,
Lo! I take thee to be mine,
On my breast to fondly cling
Bride of my bold pilfering.

A CHURCH

I KNOW a church I would not miss,
And thither oft my footsteps wend,
'Tis not some costly edifice,
This quiet church that I attend.

Far from the city's roar and din,
Among eternal hills it stands,
And strangely I'm without when in
This temple never made with hands.

A woodsy pathway is my pew,
That's lined with tangl'd underbrush,
While here no noisy avenue
Disturbs my chorister — the thrush.

Far deeper thoughts by him are stirr'd
Than other choirs I might confess,
Where I can't understand a word,
And at its meaning only guess.

My preacher is a squirrel, he
A Quaker as his habit proves,
His pulpit yonder chestnut tree,
Among whose leaves " The spirit moves "—

Thro' lofty arches overhead,
The breezes that so gently stir,
And whisper o'er my bowéd head,
A lone and silent worshipper.

Across the aisle a tiny wren,
While I, in silent rapture list,
Lifts up a cheery bright Amen,
I'm sure she is a Methodist.

O'er sunlit meadows green and fair,
The windows of my church look out,
The text — God's love is everywhere,
Ah! who can read and who can doubt?

'Tis seen upon the rose's blush,
That bends before the ardent bee,
'Tis heard upon the noonday's hush
That mantles every hill and lea.

The evening breeze, the cooling balm,
Day's flambeaus kindling in the west,
The lengthening shade, the twilight calm,
The peace, the quiet and—the rest.

The sermon ends, I turn away,
With laggard footsteps while I hear
A lark sing to the closing day
His nunc dimittis sweet and clear.

SPRING SONG

DIS mawn de byards war singin'
An' de crocuses war springin'
An' de folks dey say dat wintah cum no mo;
An' to-night de win' am howlin',
An' ershriekin' an' ergrowlin',
An' fo de lan's sake, honey, shet dat do'!

THE ROBBER

I SAW him bear down on the wind
This robber that I have in mind,
A roving, royster rascal he,
A busy, burly bumble bee.
From underneath the apple trees
I watch'd him on the vagrant breeze,
Upon the drowsy afternoon
I heard him sing his lulling tune
With all his well known sorceries,
Above the rose's bowéd head,
I saw the faint blush that o'erspread,
At the caresses of this lover
Who all her secrets would discover.
From rarest nectars that distil
I saw him boldly take his fill,
Then up and off this pirate bold
Swung down upon the marigold,
And sailing o'er the fragrant seas
I saw him filch with daring ease
The poppies and the peonies.
I watched from out my shaded spot
The wild rose and forget-me-not,

To all of his demands so dear,
Pay tribute to this buccaneer.
But in my breast for him there throbs
No horror keen while thus he robs,
Apparently with no regret,
The larkspur and the mignonette,
For fairer than the rose is she,
And if like this bold bandit bee,
Her heart if — well — if say, from her,
If I could steal away from her,
From her sweet lips could I but wring
Confession by such pilfering,
Then let me whisper, *entre nous,*
You bet I'd be a robber too.

THE FOREST

AS tho it were some quiet interlude
That came into your busy life,
Or cooling hand upon the fever'd strife,
That calm'd you into reverent mood,
While thus you stood within the solitude,
Stript to your soul amid the hush profound,
Where only sound is silence, silence sound,
And your own heartbeats only dared intrude.

Or if a door were shut and far behind
You left the noisy world without,
And heard no more the tumult and the shout,
But the still voice of some far Larger Mind,
Within this temple with its aisles untrod,
And here you found yourself—and God.

MT. BIGELOW IN MAINE

(From a neighboring hill top)

THERE Bigelow with majestic prow
Immovable at anchor rides.
Proud Dreadnaught of the forest sea,
Against whose mighty rock ribb'd sides
Sweep pine and spruce and balsam tides,
In silent, stately majesty.
What tho' the mists her bow enshrouds
Her ensign flies among the clouds.

A MARCH SUNSET

BEYOND the city's roofs and spires,
Defiant still tho sore opprest,
Day seeks his gilded couch of rest
Mid bivouac of resplendent fires.

Now o'er the brilliant, wide expanse
His challenge to the night is sent,
Behind each fire rimm'd battlement
With high uplifted flaming lance.

Far to encroaching shadows flung
His banners stream, transparent, pale,
As tho he filch'd Aurora's veil
And o'er those purple ramparts hung.

Down the wide reaches of the sky
His burnish'd golden argosies,
Freighted from fair Hesperides
On soundless, surfless, sapphire seas
Full sail'd at quiet anchor lie.

Oh, wondrous changing color scene
Which, I, enraptured, watch the while,
Of crimson peak and glittering isle
And Dian's sickle hung between.

Anon around my window high,
Untaméd winds by Aeolus driven
Across the stormy face of heaven
Like snapping, snarling wolves go by.

The shadows deepen, the day is done,
Now, jealous twilight steals away
To hide within her mantle gray
My fading pictures, one by one.

Save where pale Venus hangs her light
Far down an emerald sea o'erblown
To guide one gilded shallop lone
Across the dusky bar of night.

SUNSET AND NIGHT

LITTLE "tar pot" on the fence
Black as ace of spades,
Eating watermelon, down
By the everglades.

Big and crescent shaped the piece,
See him now begin it,
Shining face all wreath'd in smiles
Deeply buried in it.

Colors of the parting day
Red and yellow, white and green,
'Mid the ever wid'ning rifts
Peep two stars between.

Corner of the melon slice
Flirting with an ear,
Sunset surely on the wane,
Darkness creeping near.

Deeper goes the dusky face,
Nearer creeps the night,

Colors fading one by one
Going out of sight.

Little " tar pot " fast asleep,
Face that knows no frown,
Eyes fast closed, mouth shut up,
Watermelon down.

KATAMA

The name of a hotel for many years deserted, standing on Katama beach, a lone spot on the south shore of Martha's Vineyard. The writer has never visited the place, and the following is written merely from hearsay with the legend thrown in as a bit of imagination.

BLEAK and dreary is the spot,
Long deserted, half forgot,
Where the billows break upon a barren shore.
Lone and desolate it stands,
And the ever shifting sands,
Pile in drifts against its weather beaten door.

Shutters swinging with a bang,
On the rusty hinges hang,
Sport of summer winds and wild Nor' Easter blow;
Thro each broken window pane
Beats the sun, the mist, the rain,
Where fair faces look'd out in the long ago.

Dark its casements where no light
Streams its welcome on the night,
And its portals open not to warmth and cheer;
Damp and clammy are its walls,
Moans the wind along its halls,
Long deserted halls for many a year.

Where the music and the dance?
Where the laughter and bright glance?
And the merry throng upon the winding stair?
On the mouldering balustrade
Dust of many years is laid,
And the hollow echoes weirdly answer—where?

Yet in that far long ago,
When it thrill'd with life and glow,
And its halls were fill'd with laughter, mirth and song,
Came a strong youth in his pride,
Came he with his fair young bride,
Fairest she 'mid all the merry throng.

There's a legend how one day
Pleasure bent he sail'd away,
Far away to where the blue line meets the sky.
Why within her heart a fear?
Why suspicion of a tear?
As he lightly kiss'd her lips in fond goodbye?

Ah! methinks I see her there,
With her wind toss'd golden hair,
Watching the faint white speck till it faded out of sight.
Gone but for a day and then
He would come to her again,
Come again before the falling of the night.

But the fisher folk still tell
How a sudden darkness fell,
How the storm king rode that night over all the sea and land.
From his lips the thunders spoke,
From his eyes the lightning's stroke,
That reveal'd the group of watchers gathered on the storm beat strand.

And among their number there
Was a pallid face and fair,
Looking out into the darkness while all night the fires burn'd,
Listening, if above the gale
Came some friendly shout or hail,
Some glad cry to tell her lover had return'd.

But with coming of the dawn,
Paler grew her face and wan,
Paler still as day by day the summer sped,
And they say that ere she died
Whispered low the fair young bride,

"Let me rest here, I would meet him when the sea gives up its dead."

That was many a year ago,
And the tides still ebb and flow,
Storm and sunshine still alternate sweep across the restless main,
But its bosom ne'er to tell
Guards a secret, guards it well,
Why a fair and girlish figure, broken hearted, watch'd in vain.

Somewhere on Katama's beach,
Just beyond the billow's reach,
Is a lonely grave unmark'd by carvéd stone,
Vainly may the passerby,
Cast a roving, searching eye,
Silent are the drifted sands of many years o'erblown.

And the mariners at sea,
Tell with awestruck mystery,
When they pass Katama on a wild and stormy night,
From a broken casement high,
Like a star against the sky,
Burns a solitary, strange, mysterious light.

And they say as they draw near,
By Katama dark and drear,

Standing grimly 'gainst the sky line on the
desolated shore,
There upon a barren dune
Sits a specter in the moon,
Of a woman looking seaward, watching, waiting
— evermore.

THE CONODOQUINET

'TIS not some mighty river flowing stately in its pride,
No laden ships from foreign shores go upwards on its tide,
'Tis not the child of pond or lake where forests line the shore,
There is no sound of rapids, no cataracts that roar,
But like a thread of silver it steals 'mid sun and shade,
Thro a vale of milk and honey, the fairest God e'er made,
With a face that's full of sunshine and a voice that's low and still,
It is just the creek of boyhood days, the creek behind the hill.

It's just the old creek flowing in a drowsy sort of way,
Like the dawn across the meadows at the breaking of the day,

But the tip-up seem'd to love it as it tilted on its brink,
And a song burst forth above it from a lilting bobolink.
The robins and the bluebirds, too, and in the evening light
The swallows skimm'd its surface low and kiss'd it in their flight.
Anon the vagrant evening breeze its mirror'd bosom mars
Where night's fair crescent shallop sails with wake of splendid stars.

'Twas here in boyhood days agone its gentle peace I knew,
When to its banks so green and fair my truant footsteps drew,
Then my heart was fill'd with laughter and all the world was mine,
With an alder for a fish pole and a three cent cotton line.
Will I e'er forget, I wonder, the boyish, keen delight
When the cork kept bobbing under and then went out of sight,
And I landed, 'mong the tree tops, with force if not with skill,
The yellow bellied sunfish from the creek behind the hill?

I wonder if the skies it holds are just as full of blue,
Or thirsty cattle wade knee deep just as they used to do,
I wonder if the new mown hay breathes on the air as sweet,
Or trailing vines are just as thick that tangl'd up my feet.
I wonder if in later years these days that once were mine
Must live in memory only when the tang has left the wine,
O'er yet the bridge below the dam again my feet shall bear
To join the creek beneath it and an old friend fishing there.

So I muse before the firelight in the quiet of my room,
While the twilight turns to darkness in the chill November gloom,
And I seem to see the old creek's flow, its ripples and its gleam
Come stealing out the Long Ago across my vagrant dream.
Again it twines around my heart in its old familiar way,
And bears upon its bosom fair a ne'er forgotten day,

Which like a golden anchor deep into my soul is cast
To hold the living Present to the never dying Past.

For there comes at times in each one's life, in yours as well as mine,
Some truant thought of other days across the rain and shine.
The days of old, the friends of gold, some memory that endears,
As gently as the thistle down it floats across the years.
It may be some dear vanished face from out the dusk of time,
It may be but an air or song like mellow'd bells achime,
It may be youth come back again, a voice that long was still,
It may be home, it may be just—the creek behind the hill.

TO THE SEA

BECAUSE upon thy storm beat shore, my soul
Looks out upon eternity,
Awestruck and impotent, boast not thyself, O,
Sea!
While at my feet thy billows roll,
And in my ears thy dirges toll,
If I look on thy face in stress or shine
With thoughts that reach beyond thy border line
In vain I would express or yet control.

For far beyond thy widest range and sweep,
Upon that Power that first created thee
In thy tempestuous strength—O Mighty Deep!
Awed into silence look thou too with me!
I, but an atom on thy thundering strand,
And thou a drop within His hollow'd hand.

THE FIRST ROBIN

LOOK a yeah, yo Mistah Robin,
What done wek me up dis mawn?
What yo mean by such erfoolin',
Foolin' sho ez yo is bawn?
Kase de day am wahm an brightah
Yo cum chuppin at ma do
"Wek up! Wek up!" Spring am comin'
An' de wintah cum no mo."
Doan you know dat ole Brer Woodchuck
Seed he's shaddah an he sayd
"Six weeks mo ob dis cole weddah
Reckon I'll gwine back to baid."
Now yo cum aroun yeah singin'
Dat de wintah cole am fru,
What you mean by such erfoolin',
Go way, Mistah Robin! Shoo!

WINTER IN THE LAP OF SPRING

DEY say dat dis cole weddah
What so long am lingering,
Am jes de ole Mars Wintah
"Res'in' in de lap o' spring."
Jes ole Mars, de white haihd sinnah
Res'in' he's ole weary haid
In de lap o' Missy Springtime,
Lak he thinks he's gwine to baid.
But the folkses round about yeah
Dey all wish dat res' wah fru,
Ole Mars may be powful tiahd,
But dey all am tiah'd too.
Now if I wah Missy Springtime
An' dat lap o' hers wah mine,
Wif Mars Wintah keepin' frum me
All de glory an' de shine,
Does yo know what I'd do, Honey?
Does yo rahly wan to know?
Well, den draw you chah up closah
An' I done will tell you, sho!
Well, while Mars wah done er res'in',
Soht o' dozin' in ma lap,
Den frum out ma April bonnet,

Kase o' snow dat he done drap
On de crocusses upon it,
Well, while Mars wah sof'ly sleepin'
Frum dat hat I'd draw a pin
Two foot long. Lawd bress yo, Honey,
How I'd up an' jab it in!
Jab it in he's laig—you heah me!
Stick it in an' inch o' two,
Yas, chile, dat's de way I fix um,
Sho's yo bawn, dat's what I do!
Reckon dat would wek Mars Wintah,
Reckon when he feel dat prick
He git pow'ful tiah'd o' res'in',
Reckon he done git up quick!
Ole Mars Wintah, de ole sinnah,
Wif he's win an' cole an' snow,
When he feels dat pin erstickin',
Reckon he light out an' go,
In a way dat's mighty s'prisin',
Jes lak all po sinnahs do,
Lak de Debbil he wah aftah
An' he feah'd he kotch um too.
When he's gwine I'd riz up smilin',
Shek de snow frum out ma lap
Dat Mars Wintah he done drap dar
Fo a pillow fo he's nap,
An' I'd tek ma Eastah bonnet
An' put on my new green gown
An' go, outen in de gyarden
Lak Ise jes' pradin' roun',

Whar de crocusses am peepin'
Soht o' scaht frum out de groun'.
An' I call out to ma chillun,
To de byards aroun' de do,
Chillun! Chillun! Stop yo shiverin',
Ole Mars gwine, he cum no mo,
Den I sofly blow ma Souf bref
O'er de holler, on de hill,
Bime by I wek de violet,
Bime by de daffydill,
An' I puts 'em in ma bonnet
An' I puts 'em in ma hyar,
An' I goes to de chuch meetin',
To de folkses dat am dar,
An' I peeks in at de window
Whiles de preachah he expoun'
How dey all am mighty sinnahs,
An' dey all am groanin' roun',
Till dey all cum out de meetin'
In de glory an' de shine,
An' dey see me all ersmilin'
Wif my hyer done up so fine,
Den de sistern an' de breddern
Kinder all jine han' in han',
An' dey all go whorlin' roun me
Shoutin'—" cum an' jine de ban,' "
Den de robins an' de bluebyards,
An' de folkses dey all sing
Glory! Glory! Halleluyahr,
Howdy! Welcum, Missy Spring.

INDIAN SUMMER

COY and dusky little maid,
"Stolen," maybe, "Lost" or "Stray'd"
From the parted summer tide,
Lingering daily at our side.
Scarlet clad and russet shod,
Golden where your footsteps trod,
With your wild coquettish ways,
Peeping through the purple haze
From the wood and misty hill,
Challenging the bluebird's trill
Through the drowsy afternoon,
On your lips the breath of June.
Ah, you rogue—incognito,
Just as if we didn't know,
Truant of the golden days,
'Long the old familiar ways,
Laughing at the drowsy bee
Waken'd by your sorcery,
With his love song humming over
Yon late bit of faded clover,
Mean of you to treat him so,
Just as if we didn't know

You are Summer come again,
Over field and wood and fen,
Come into the hearts of men,
Who despite those half veiled eyes
Quickly pierce the thin disguise,
And enrapt by such rare charms,
Welcome thee with open arms.
Little witch with face all smiling,
Captive to your soft beguiling.
Song of bird its soul outpouring,
At thy feet the world adoring,
Rover from the summer tide
Linger with us — long abide!
Prove it false, that warning cry
From yon travelers flying high,
Trailing down the southward sky,
We would hold thee, would detain,
But, alas! 'tis all in vain.
Down yon western fiery slope
Vanishes our fondest hope,
When with golden finger tips
From your roguish, ruddy lips,
Coy and fickle little miss,
Fling you then a saucy kiss
From a windy, evening sky,
Bidding all the world—Goodbye!

BEFORE THE TOY WINDOW

"A little child shall lead them."

THEY stood before it, hand in hand,
Out in the cold while the keen wind fann'd
His pale cheek and her dark hair—
Two little waifs in the wintry air.
A tatter'd coat and a ravell'd dress
And hungry eyes full of wistfulness,
And a sigh in each heart that you may guess,
Two little Arabs, hand in hand,
Looking into the Wonderland.

Looking into the Wonderland, where
They saw a doll with flaxen hair,
And eyes of blue that open'd wide,
With a big, white, woolly dog at her side.
There were automobiles and a train of cars,
There were wagons and horses and spangles and stars,
There were trumpets and drums and birds that flew,
And lions and tigers and elephants, too,
That bow'd their heads with a howdy do!

And brownies and elfins as if fairies had plann'd
The wonderful things in this Wonderland.

The day was closing, 'twas time to leave;
The window was lighted, 'twas Christmas eve,
But still they linger'd with look intent,
And forgot their home in a tenement
Down on the East Side, cheerless and cold,
In this wonderful scene of glitter and gold.
So they warm'd their cold little finger tips
With the breath from their chill'd and blue little lips
That quiver'd and trembl'd as when on one night
They look'd on their mother, so still and so white,
In a box that was long and was cover'd with black,
When they took her away and—she never came back.
But instead a strange woman that took her place,
Who was ugly and cross with a scar on her face,
They forgot their home with its rough, wooden stairs,
The cold, cheerless room with its rickety chairs
And a table so broken it could hardly stand,
They saw only before them the Wonderland.

Outside by the curb in her limousine,
That shone like a jewel with polish and sheen,

Sat a lady of wealth with a face that was fair,
But I noted that traces of sadness were there.
And the shouts of the merrymakers seem'd drown'd
At the thought of a little wind-swept mound
On a hill far away, 'neath the whirling snow
Where her life went out in the long ago,
When suddenly she saw in the window's glare
These two little waifs that were standing there,
And a strange, new feeling tugg'd and stirr'd
At her heartstrings till it seem'd she heard,
As she sat in her sables and comfort and ease,
These words, " Unto one of the least of these,"
And before she knew it she had each little hand
And she led them into the Wonderland.

Then, oh! what a wonderful time they had—
This little maid and this little lad,
With this fairy godmother so rich and so grand,
She bought trumpet and drum, she bought the whole band,
And the nice big doll with its eyes so blue
And the elephant that bow'd with a howdy do!
And a sled and some candies and other things, too.
Then with pockets that bulg'd and little hands fill'd,
Somehow the heart hunger, that cried was still'd,
And when she look'd down on each little child
A wan little face look'd upward and—smiled.

And somehow to her, when the presents were given,
It seemed that each smile held a wee bit of Heaven.
And that night, when later she went to her bed,
Her sadness had vanished, there was peace there instead,
As she thought of a little tin soldier grand
Held tight in a dirty, bare little hand.

Oh, we beggars with pride and power and pelf,
Who look for our happiness centered in self,
Who follow it far through pleasure or pain,
And seek it in wealth, so often in vain,—
We who are poor and hungry and weary and blind
And give up in despair, at last we may find,
Like the prodigal son from a far away land,
That happiness oft dwells quite close to our hand;
That in hungering hearts and wistful eyes
To cheer and relieve the pathway lies,
A pathway not flower'd with dogmas and creeds,
'Tis the pathway of love and daily it leads
Through a world of suffering, a world of needs,
In a wonderful way we can't understand
Till it seems as if Heaven itself were spann'd.

Oh, we thirsters for greed who struggle and hoard

On the altars of gain where our life blood is
pour'd,
Who faint as we run, though still we pursue
The phantom of happiness, if only we knew
Far brighter than glitter of bauble or gem
In the scepter of king or his diadem
It may shine in the eyes of a friendless child,
From a wan little face that look'd upward and
smil'd.
It may cost but a doll with eyes that are blue,
Or the elephant that bows with a howdy do!
And here's wishing a Merry Christmas to you.
And then—who knows?—we, too, by and by,
With our hearts ahunger and wistful eye,
May see far away on a golden strand
The Christ child to greet us and take our cold
hand
And lead us—into the Wonderland.

DUCK SHOOTING AT SAYBROOK

LOW tide and storm and closing day,
And sea gulls white against the gray
Of sullen cloud o'erhung the rim
Of the horizon. Gaunt specters dim
And rising fog from swamp and sedge
The incense of the river's edge,
A stranded boat with larboard list
And—only the rain and the mist.

A reed bound cove, a soggy "blind"
Chill'd through and wet but it's not mind
When you hear the sound of whistling wings
As out of the fog come rushing things,
Broad bill and black and whistler and teal,
Then a grip on the trigger, a glance 'long the steel,
And a growing pile of empty shells
While the Du Pont powder surplus swells.
Oh! the showers of shot that hurtl'd and hiss'd,
And—only the rain and the miss'd.

THE SONG OF THE WIND

SPIRIT am I of the boundless sky,
Restless, untamèd and driven,
Mariner free on a chartless sea,
Sailing the wastes of heaven.

I rove 'mong the spheres, I ride down the years,
And on thro' the ages I swing,
With a universe sweep I cover the deep,
I fold a world 'neath my wing.

From the frozen North I sally forth
O'er the starlit crests a-dream,
Where they plight their troth at the altar cloth
Of the glacier's moonlit gleam.

I sing 'mong the peaks where the lightning streaks
And the thunders are set a-chime,
Where their peans roll to the boreal pole
'Long the upturn'd edge of time

Then off into space, ah, who shall trace
Or follow my flying track,
Or who shall bind or who shall find
My step in the wave or the wrack?

Forever to roam from my cavern home
I sweep over land and sea,
A Bedouin I of the desert sky,
Who knoweth my destiny?

I pipe the morn on the Golden Horn
And off on the Zuyder Zee,
I belly the sails to my sweeping gales,
I range over Araby.

I steal o'er the land with a flower in hand,
I shriek 'bove the breakers' boom,
The tears I dry from a violet's eye,
I send a ship to its doom.

With shapeless form I ride the storm
Out, out where the black waves are,
I stifle the cry 'neath a moonless sky
Of a voice from a drifting spar.

In my mad wild glee no laws decree
Shall fetter my flying wing,
I flip the flap of a peasant's cap,
I doff the hat of a king.

For I am the wind, the untamèd wind,
Unconquered, unconquerable driven,
I am here, I am there, I am everywhere,
The vagabond wraith of heaven.

A COWBOY'S WOOING

I WANT you, little woman, and I'm coming like a man
To ask that little hand of yours and win it if I can,
I'm standing right before you and I'm looking in your eyes
That are deeper than the canyon, that are bluer than the skies.
There ain't no style about me, and I know I'm rather rough,
And I reckon for a girl like you I'm hardly good enough,
I ain't like them there city chaps way off there in the East,
My shirt ain't biled and pleated, my trousers aren't creased,
But I've got a heart within me with a beat that's strong and true,
It's as big as all creation and it's branded deep with you.

I want you, little woman, and I know it isn't fair,
I tried to stave the feeling off, I tried it on the square,
I fought it out the whole night long, beneath the starlit sky,
Ask Pete, my broncho standing there, now Pete he wouldn't lie,
But when I hear your laughter, the air with music fills
Like the murmur of a brooklet 'mong the old New Hampshire hills,
Those dear old hills of childhood that once I used to know,
And I said, "Well, Pete, I'll try it, if she'll give me half a show."

So I'm asking, little lassie, with a feeling that is strange
For a rough and reckless cowboy who has knock'd about the range,
Who has heard the song of bullets when the boys came into town
And the demons rose and tore them as the fiery stuff went down,
When the flickering, half dead lights went out against the smoky wall,
And the guns flash'd 'cross the blackness, who has heard the heavy fall

Where a Colt's holds law and order in a way no one disputes,
And at its sharp decisions men lie right down in their boots.
Yes, I've killed my man, my lassie, he was mad with drink and thirst,
He tried to get the drop on me, but—my lead it reached him first,
Now my hands are up, my lassie, and I'm trembling all clean through
While I'm waiting for an answer from those down-cast eyes of blue.

A RAINY MAY

LOOK a yeah, yo Missy May,
Wif yo Quakah bonnet gray,
Cryin', cryin' all de while,
What's de mattah, lil' chile?
Ain' yo nebber gwine to smile?
Kyant yo wipe dem teahs away?
What's de mattah, Missy May?

Yo jes' goes ertrapesin' roun'
O'er de wet an' soggy groun',
Lak as ef yo diden' kyar,
Wif de Souf win' in you hyar,
An' de cloud mist in yo eyes,
Yo jes' cries an' cries an' cries,
Wif you forehead in a frown
Yo jes' goes ertrapesin' roun'.

All de folkses dey complain
'Bout dis eberlasin' rain,
Violet, she done drap hyr haid;
Woodchuck he done gwine to baid,
Tain't no fishin', brooks too high,

Fish all drown'd, dat ain no lie!
No use plantin', things won't grow,
Folkses dey all wan' to know
Why yo axts in dis strange way,
What's de mattah, Missy May?

Doan' yo know, po honey chile,
Dat gray bonnet out o' style?
Peahs lak hits too ole fo you,
Whar's dat uddah one o' blue
Wif de sun beams fo de strings,
Trimm'd wif flashin' blue byrd wings,
Violets an' tulips on it?
Honey chile! whar am dat bonnet
Fill'd wif glory an' de shine?
My! dat meks yo look so fine!
Put it on, sweet honey chile,
Put it on an' stay erwhile,
Look from outen it an' smile.
Den de folkses dey all say
Ain' she lubly—Missy May!

TO A WOOD THRUSH

I HEARD thee from the drowsy glade
Ere fell the twilight's tender gloom,
Across the apple blossom's bloom,
I heard thee and my steps were stay'd.

Far up on yonder elm high
An Israfel, the thrasher, sings,
Full throated as he proudly flings
His florid arias 'cross the sky.

Within the tangled copse below
The catbird mock'd him as he swung
Where gold and sapphire banners hung,
And flambeaus kindled to a glow.

But when his brilliant tones were mute
Then to the grosbeak's barcarolle,
Out from the leafy covert stole
The obligato of thy flute.

Oh! wine of song! Oh, purple wine!
Held in the sunset's burnish'd gold,

Did e'er the gods such chalice hold
Or drink a nectar so divine?

Vain may I leave or vainly stir,
While from the tuneful underbrush,
Thy low, rich voice—Oh! minstrel thrush!
Holds me a spellbound worshipper.

Oh, evening shade! Oh, woodland balm!
Oh, singer to the closing day!
With laggard steps I turn away
Thrill'd by the magic of thy lay,
Thy nunc dimittis o'er the calm.

TO A CRICKET

MINSTREL of the silent night
Somewhere 'neath my window height,
In the grasses, out of sight!
To my restless bed of pain
Comes to me your shrill refrain,
One note — o'er and o'er again.
Funny little tune it is,
Rather shy of harmonies,
Quite staccato is its measure,
Yet it rather gives me pleasure,
Helps the weary hours to pass,
Little fiddler in the grass.
Brighter days it seems to bring
As I lie here listening,
And I wonder what you're for,
Unseen little troubador!
Serenader, 'neath the moon
On these stilly nights in June,
What the part that you rehearse
In this great big universe?
Think of worlds and then a cricket

Rasping in the grassy thicket!
Is your mission but to play
These still summer nights away?
All too shortly do they last,
All too quickly are they pass'd,
Wonder! could I guess the riddle
Minstrel with the rasping fiddle.
At a venture, I should say,
As you blithely play away,
You're musician both to kings
And to insect life and things
That the passing summer brings.
This is how it came to me
What your purpose here might be.
As I heard you yesternight
Somewhere 'neath my window height,
There's a concert on, I said,
Down there in the flower bed,
And tho I was not invited
I felt not the least bit slighted,
But in fancy saw it all,
Artists, audience, concert hall.
Stage—a bit of garden walk
Edg'd with pinks and poppy stalk,
There a bit of four leaf'd clover
With a rose bush hanging over,
Footlights of the firefly's glow,
Rang'd before it in a row,
And for parquet chairs around

Rose leaves scatter'd o'er the ground.
Frescoed canopy o'erspread
Of the rose bush overhead,
And for light o'er all the scene,
Moonlit dewdrops sown between,
Little arc lights 'mid the green.
Spared was not the least expense,
Fashionable the audience,
The occasion somewhat rare,
All society was there.
Near a primrose half way hid
Sat the fair Miss Katy Did,
Manners stately as a queen,
In a gown of palish green.
To describe it were in vain,
I should say 'twas cut en train,
She's a player, too, of note
Only one—that someone wrote.
Next to her with ogling stare
Mr. June Bug—Millionaire!
Coat of black and vest of yellow,
Much I do dislike the fellow,
Cinch he is, yet not a "cinch"
When he gets you in a "pinch"
He will squeeze you then for fair,
Trust him not and so — beware!
Over there Miss Moth, until her
Name was changed to Mrs. Miller,
Her gown white as purest snow,

Too bad that she powders so!
If you doubt it or would scoff
Touch it and it will come off
On your fingers thickly laid
Star dust of the finest grade.
Mrs. Beetle all in black,
How it shimmer'd down her back!
But 'mong all so richly dress'd
This the gown I liked the best.
Mistress Lady Bug in red,
And altho it must be said
On the back that it was spotted,
'Twas the fashion—polka dotted.
She's the pet of all the garden
Is this little Dolly Varden,
If you doubt it or deny
Go and ask young Fire Fly,
At her side a slyly larking,
Can't you see him do his "sparking"?
'Neath the grape vine is their tryst,
But—here comes the soloist!
Tenor, Signor Mus Quito,
Bowing to the parquet row,
Who, despite his foreign name,
Is familiar—just the same.
Yes! too well I know the fellow,
With his high C's soft and mellow
Stealing round my restless pillow,
And tho not condoned his stealing,

I admit he sings with *feeling;*
But his song, oft heard before
Never yet drew forth encore,
Rather left me hot and irate
At this bold intruding pirate
Who all strangely, by digression,
Is a doctor by profession,
When on nights so close and thermic
Comes he with his hypodermic,
Lights on cheek, or nose, or ear,
This bloodthirsty buccaneer.
Calmly then he straight inserts you
Quite regardless tho he hurts you,
And his bill, tho you resent it,
Just as oft he will present it,
And his fee, tho you reject it,
Be assured he will collect it.
But the hum and buzzing ceases,
Now expectancy increases
Silence falls upon the throng,
Let us listen to his song.

THE SERENADE
Song of the Mus Quito

I come from the swamp and dank lagoon,
To my lady's boudoir winging,
In the silvery light of the waning moon,
To her lattice I come singing,

And softly I sing my serenade
In the pinkest ear that e'er was made,
As I steal in on the cool night shade
To the side of my fair one sleeping.

Sleep, my pretty one, sleep!
And I thy vigil will keep,
May you never hear your lover draw near!
Your caresses I'll gladly excuse, my dear!
So sleep my pretty one, sleep!

The night is silent and still, my dear!
And the stars they are deeply burning,
As I, thy lover, am drawing near,
With a heart that is fill'd with yearning,
As I steal a kiss from a ruddy lip,
Or light on a rosy finger tip,
And drink wine rarer than kings may sip,
From my love so softly sleeping.

Sleep, my pretty one, sleep!
And I thy vigil will keep,
May you never hear your lover draw near,
Your caresses I'll gladly excuse, my dear!
So sleep, my pretty one sleep,!

Her fair young cheek with a rose's blush,
Is full exposed from cover,

The moon's asleep and the wind's ahush
As I sing my love song over.
And when at last my fill I take,
I fly away to the misty brake,
Ere the dawn comes up and the birds awake,
From the side of my fair one sleeping.

Sleep, my pretty one, sleep!
And the ruby I stole, I'll keep
Excuse the theft and forgive the pain,
And some other night I will call again,
So sleep, my, pretty one, sleep!

He has finished and has bow'd
To the plaudits of the crowd,
Such an ending—so to speak,
Seems to me a bit of cheek,
Which of course he'd rightly own,
O'er so many he has flown;
But his singing, if confest,
Show'd his voice was at its best,
And the first time, seems to me,
I enjoy'd his concert free,
Up here in my balcony.
But ere all my praise be spent,
Splendid your accompaniment,
Little fiddler of the night

Playing truly—"out of sight."
But, however well you play'd
Ne'er the record that you made
On a certain well known hearth
Playing there for all you're worth,
Fiddled into fame and glory,
And imperishable story,
Something I can never do.,
Therefore do I envy you.
Well, my tuneful little friend,
Comes my guessing to an end!
Only this thing do I know,
Little minstrel down below,
That whate'er the purpose be
Of this great life mystery,
'Tis the great Creator's will,
You've some mission here to fill,
Tho 'twere but to still my pain
By your one high key'd refrain
Were that mission not in vain.
So my comrade of the night,
Fiddling 'neath my window height,
Near, and yet beyond my reach,
This the lesson thou dost teach,
Tho'we may not know or see
Through Life's meaning—mystery,
Through its vast complexity;
Tho' my life comes not into thine,
Nor thy life enters into mine,

Still — we're in this world together
Thro its every stress of weather,
You to your lot, I to mine,
Thro the rain, the storm, the shine,
And tho fiddling on one string
Seems a very little thing,
I am sure my life would tell
Play'd I my part half as well.

AN ALASKAN CATHEDRAL

(With permission from *Scribner's.*)

Its walls are bound by the ages round,
Its font is an ice rimm'd sea,
Its nave is the gorge where the ice packs forge,
Its dome is Eternity.

The white drifts swirl 'round its shafts of pearl
Far up 'long the shining pass,
The sunset's glow o'er its crests of snow
Is its windows of stainèd glass.

Oh, man of sin, wouldst thou enter in,
Wouldst thou kneel at its glittering shrine,
Where the ice bound trail is the chancel rail
Far above the last, lone pine?

Where the twilight falls on its opal walls,
And the lights of the night are hung,
Where its altar gleams in the starlight beams
And its censer, the moon, is swung?

Where the silence speaks and the snow clad peaks
With their glow of splendid stars,
Are the candlesticks and its crucifix
Is the North Light's shimmering bars?

Whose altar cloth nor time nor moth
Shall tarnish its frost lit sheen,
'Tis the glacier wide and the needles that plied
Are icicles, long and lean?

Where far on yon heights its acolytes
The mists are drawing near,
And a surplice falls from its crystal walls,
Where the sides are bleak and sheer?

Oh, man of sin, wouldst thou enter in,
Canst thou up to that altar climb,
Where the snows are driven wouldst thou be
shriven,
Where the moon-lit crystals chime?

Oh! its crags are bold and the stars are cold,
Hast thy spirit then no qualms?
When hunger and want like the gray wolf gaunt
At its door shall ask of thee alms?

Far down in its crypt by the ice pack gript,
Are forms that are silent and cold,
And stiff in its bands are the vandal hands
That would rob its coffers of gold.

In the canyon grim with an avalanche rim
Their shroud the storm winds shall hem,
From the forest's cowl the gray wolf's howl
Shall wail their requiem.

Oh! man, beware, of those altars fair,
Of that "holy of holies" untrod,
Where the ice crags ring and the planets swing,
And the only priest is God.